

Message Text

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FOR CARTER FROM PA

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TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (VANCE)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL FRIDAY
AUGUST 5 HEADED "'CONCEDING A THIRD OF GERMANY'."

2. THAT SENSATIONAL EVANS NOVAK COLUMN SAYING THAT UNITED
STATES IS CONSIDERING "A NEW DEFENSE STRATEGY THAT SECRET-
LY CONCEDES ONE-THIRD OF WEST GERMANY TO A SOVIET INVASION
RATHER THAN SEEK INCREASED DEFENSE SPENDING" POSES A
COUPLE OF PUZZLES. WHY, FOR INSTANCE, WOULD ANY RESPON-
SIBLE OFFICIAL LEAK SOMETHING THAT IS PREPOSTEROUS AT
FACE, AT LEAST IN OUR JUDGMENT, AND THAT, TRUE OR FALSE,
CAN HAVE ONLY MISCHIEVOUS EFFECTS ON ALLIANCE CONFIDENCE
AND, CONCEIVABLY, ON SOVIET PLANNING? HE WOULD DO THE
LEAKING, WE PRESUME, TO BUILD UP SOME POLITICAL STEAM FOR
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"INCREASED DEFENSE SPENDING." DETECTING THE SELF-SERVING
ASPECT OF A LEAK, ANY LEAK, IS A CONSTANT CHALLENGE FACING
THE CONSUMERS OF WASHINGTON JOURNALISM.

3. BUT, YOU MAY ASK, IS THERE NOT SOME TRUTH IN THE
COLUMN? THERE'S A LOT, IF WHAT THE COLUMNISTS MEANT BY
"CONCEDING" A THIRD OF GERMANY WAS THAT, IN THE INITIAL

PHASE OF A FULL-SCALE SURPRISE ATTACK, THE WARSAW PACT MIGHT SEIZE SUBSTANTIAL TERRITORY BEFORE NATO COULD EFFECTIVELY RESPOND. OTHERWISE, THE COLUMN TESTIFIES TO THE SERIOUSNESS OF CURRENT ADMINISTRATION DEBATE OVER WHETHER THE CONVENTIONAL FORCES OF NATO CAN DETER A WARSAW PACT ATTACK, REPEL SUCH AN ATTACK IF IT COMES, AND DO SO WITHOUT EMPLOYING NUCLEAR WEAPONS UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. NATO'S STRATEGY ALWAYS HAS BEEN AND, ACCORDING TO THE PRESIDENT, STILL IS TO CONDUCT A "FORWARD DEFENSE" WITH AN EYE TO CONCEDED AS LITTLE TERRITORY FOR AS SHORT A TIME AS POSSIBLE. BUT THE WARSAW PACT BUILDUP OF THE LAST FEW YEARS HAS RAISED DOUBTS ABOUT WHETHER NATO CAN STILL PUT THAT STRATEGY INTO EFFECT.

4. IT IS PRECISELY THESE DOUBTS THAT UNDERLIE THE ADMINISTRATION'S ATTEMPTS TO FRESHEN ITS MILITARY PLANNING, TO BEEF UP THE ALLIANCE'S CONVENTIONAL DEFENSES, TO NEGOTIATE FORCE REDUCTIONS IN EUROPE AND, INCIDENTALLY, TO OPEN AN OPTION TO DEPLOY THE NEUTRON BOMB--AN OFFSET FOR MOSCOW'S WIDELY PRESUMED CONVENTIONAL SUPERIORITY. THE DISCUSSION ON THESE MATTERS IS INTENSE; THE COLUMN PLUGGED INTO PART OF IT.

5. THE COLUMN HAS HAD, HOWEVER, ONE GOOD RESULT. IT ELICITED FROM THE PRESIDENT AND HIS CHIEF ADVISERS POINTED REAFFIRMATIONS OF THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO ITS EUROPEAN

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ALLIES. THEIR RELIANCE ON THIS COUNTRY IS SO GREAT AND PERMANENT THAT, WITH OR WITHOUT NEWSPAPER STORIES, THEY WILL ALWAYS WONDER WHETHER, IN THE CLUTCH, THE AMERICANS WILL BE THERE. IT IS A CONTINUING TASK OF AMERICAN POLICY TO FIND PERSUASIVE WAYS TO SAY YES. CHRISTOPHER

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